



HICKORY CITY COUNCIL'S FY2007-2008 PRIORITIES AND ACTION PLAN

Annually, the Hickory City Council adopts priorities and associated action plans that are derived from the annual Council-Staff Retreat, the City's master plans, formal action taken by City Council throughout the year, and the City Manager's assessment of initiatives that need to be considered by City Council. These Priorities and Action Plans are used during the fiscal year as a guide to ensure that City departments advocate the philosophy and goals defined by City Council for the City of Hickory.

On February 14th and February 15th 2007, the City of Hickory held its 22nd Annual Council-Staff Planning Retreat. Facilitated discussions with City Council and City Staff centered on service levels enhancements, unfunded needs, revenue options, and economic development concerns.

This document contains City Council's top strategic priorities, management directives and major projects and initiatives to be undertaken by the City during the year. Each priority, directive and project lists goals to be accomplished and states action plans with measurable outcomes. As in the past, updates with progress on the Priorities and Action Plan will be provided to City Council on a regular basis.

Strategic Priority: Economic Growth & Transportation

1. Promote Economic Development and Jobs

- A. Develop creative policies, tools and partnerships for generating economic growth and opportunities.
- B. Partner in the development of a multijurisdictional business park focused on data centers.
- C. Promote redevelopment of obsolete manufacturing facilities by pursuing Brown Field assistance and other resources.
- D. Work with the Downtown business owners to meet their objectives for higher service levels via the Business Improvement District.
- E. Create marketable industrial sites at Fairgrove Business Park and continue to market City properties for economic development.
- F. Partner with the CVB, Chamber of Commerce and other organizations to develop a web based marketing tool to promote Hickory's amenities to targeted sectors such as retirement, health care, distribution, manufacturing and professional services.
- G. Develop a recommendation on addressing dilapidated commercial structures within the City limits (ie. Commercial Abatement Code).



City Council Priorities and Action Plan

3. Implement Best Practices in Development Regulation

- A. Begin to update the City's Land Development Code and Transportation and Land Development Plan so that they are is more consistent, and user friendly.
- B. Pursue a proactive customer service initiative with the development community.

4. Improve Transportation

- A. Facilitate the 13th Ave SE connection to McDonald Parkway.
- B. Complete the Clement Blvd Extension Project.
- C. Consider new business strategies arising from the Airport Task Force Report to make Hickory Regional Airport more self-sufficient and a more effective economic development tool.
- D. Provide funding in the FY07-08 Annual Budget for the operation of the Air Traffic Control Tower at the Hickory Regional Airport.
- E. Implement Transit Regionalization Study recommendations.
- F. Work with NCDOT and the MPO to develop projects benefiting Hickory and develop additional strategies for funding the City's transportation needs.
- G. Provide additional funding in the FY07-08 Annual Budget for the City's street resurfacing program.

5. Maximize the City's regional utilities

- A. Pursue new utility extensions and regional agreements to enhance the utility system's economy of scale.
- B. Use the City's strength in water and sewer services as an economic development tool.

Strategic Priority: Natural Environment and Quality of Life

1. Improve and Protect the Quality of Lake Hickory

- A. Continue to lead and support our coalition of local governments in the Catawba River Basin to protect the river from inter basin transfers.
- B. In meeting the new federal storm water regulations, evaluate the City's storm water system options, develop possible levels of service and revenue options for City Council's consideration.
- C. Operate fully compliant water and wastewater facilities.
- D. Complete design work and begin construction on the NEWWTP Upgrade Project and implement the "Year 4" sewer rate increase to fund the upgrade.



City Council Priorities and Action Plan

- E. Complete design and begin construction of the Catawba WWTP with funding from Catawba County and proceeds from the \$2,500 Catawba Plant connection fee.
- F. Partner with other organizations (Reese Institute, Covekeepers, WaterWatch, Duke Power, Catawba River Study Committee) to promote policies and practices which protect the river, improve water quality and provide for water supply.

2. Improve Air Quality

- A. Monitor air quality attainment issues and support efforts to address those causes.
- B. Promote awareness of ozone action days.

3. Provide a Safe Community for Residents and Visitors

- A. Provide additional funding in the FY07-08 Annual Budget to hire additional Police Officers to address an increase in criminal activity in the City.
- B. Promote proactive public safety partnerships with citizens and neighborhood groups.
- C. Pursue single-family home ownership opportunities in strategic locations.

4. Support Downtown Development and Activities

- A. Continue to support downtown festivals and activities with in-kind services.
- B. Continue the City's partnership with the Downtown Development Association.
- C. Use public assets downtown to promote growth and create a convenient and beautiful experience.
- D. In partnership with the Business Improvement District, create a safer environment.

5. Support and Protect Neighborhoods

- A. Provide staff liaisons to recognized neighborhood associations.
- B. Respond effectively and timely to neighborhood request for City services including traffic calming, trash collection, policing, etc.
- C. Proactively enforce minimum housing and nuisance ordinances.
- D. Develop and recommend a policy focused on landlord accountability.
- E. Continue to market City properties for housing development.
- F. Pursue partnerships with non-profit housing groups to promote single-family home ownership.
- G. Pursue strategies for redeveloping and improving the City's most distressed residential neighborhoods

City Council Priorities and Action Plan



6. Offer High Quality Recreation and Educational Opportunities

- A. Receive excellent customer rating for recreation programs.
- B. Receive excellent customer rating for library programs.
- C. Provide well-maintained and clean recreation facilities.
- D. Present a recommended lease agreement with Hickory Baseball, Inc. to City Council, prior to the 2008 baseball season.

Strategic Priority: Operational Excellence

1. Provide exceptional customer service

- A. Provide customer service training to coworkers semi- annually.
- B. Each coworker's performance evaluation will reflect customer service.

2. Invest in City Coworkers

- A. Provide internal training for supervisors.
- B. Promote and fund higher education opportunities which will benefit the coworker and the City.
- C. Recognize, formally and informally, coworkers achievements.
- D. Fund a performance based compensation system.

3. Constant Improvement of Operations

- A. Continue to reengineer service delivery to create long-term savings.
- B. Streamline paperwork for police officers
- C. Maintain the City's excellent standing for all services included in the NC Performance Measurement Project.

Strategic Priority: Vision and Leadership

1. Support and Promote Higher Education Opportunities

- A. Continue leadership support and seek funding for the HMHEC and the new Engineering Center
- B. Take a leadership role in seeking the location of a public university in the Hickory area.

2. Lead Regional Initiatives

- A. Be a leading partner in the development of a multijurisdictional business park.
- B. Continue to lead the region in protecting and promoting the Catawba River Basin .

City Council Priorities and Action Plan



- C. Facilitate discussions on how to better work as a region on economic development issues.
- 3. Assess City's Strategic Vision
 - A. Review the existing vision and mission statement for relevance.
 - B. Assess the cost and feasibility of a City wide, citizen focused visioning process.
 - C. Develop and update long range plans for City Services.
- 4. Promote City Priorities to Federal and State Governments
 - A. Seek state and federal funds for transportation and utilities
 - B. Actively participate and influence state-wide NC League issues.
 - C. Provide insight and perspective on national (National League of Cities) issues.
 - D. Seek additional revenue options for City Council consideration.

Strategic Priority: Communication and Marketing

- 1. Promote Hickory's All America City Status
 - A. Partner with private and public sector entities to promote the AAC designation.
 - B. Promote the All America City to our residents.
- 2. Promote the City of Hickory to Our Residents
 - A. Provide a simple and effective means to communicate City Council's Priorities and Action Plan to citizens.
 - B. Make City Snippets interesting and provide timely items for residents.
 - C. Continue to offer and support interactive and innovative programs offered by the City, such as the Neighborhood College, and the Citizen's Police Academy.
- 3. Communicate Effectively with Customers about Delivery of Services.
 - A. Respond timely and inform citizens of results of "Action Requests"
 - B. Inform citizens about Hickory services, projects, and awards.
 - C. Keep the city's website vibrant and informative.
 - D. Use print, radio and TV media to communicate with our citizens.
 - E. Communicate effectively with organized neighborhood groups, boards and commissions, and other partners.

City Council Priorities and Action Plan



HICKORY CITY COUNCIL FY 2007-2008 FINANCIAL POLICIES

These Financial Policies are adopted to guide the City in the financial management of all funds. Although the North Carolina Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act regulates North Carolina governmental units in financial matters, these policies adopted by the City Council are often more stringent, and reflect the specific desires of City Council. These Financial Policies are designed to allow the City to function as a fiscally sound governmental unit.

A. Revenue Policy

1. The property tax rate shall be set each year based on the cost of providing general government services.
2. The rate and fee structure established for the Water and Sewer Fund will be sufficient to finance needed operating, capital, and debt service costs for providing water and sewer services.
3. The City will take steps to continue to move the Solid Waste Fund towards becoming self-supporting.
4. Revenue projections will be made in a conservative manner.
5. To the extent practical, any City service that benefits specific recipients shall be supported either fully or in part by user fees. Examples are certain recreation programs, and Fire Inspections activities.
6. The City will project revenues for five years and will update those projections annually.
7. Fund Balance Appropriated shall not exceed an amount that management can reasonably expect to save during the year.

B. Operating Budget Policy

1. Set the targeted General Fund Balance at 25%.
2. The City will continue to develop benchmarks and productivity ratios integrated with work performance standards to assist in the evaluation of expenditures.
3. Continue the City's participation in the North Carolina Performance Measurement Project.



4. The City will prepare a five-year operating budget projection that will include projections of annual growth plus allowances for operating costs of new capital facilities.
5. Ensure that all water and sewer expansions represent sound investments for the City.

C. Capital Improvement Policy

1. The City will update and adopt annually a Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan, which will detail each capital project, the estimated cost and description. This plan will be used as a guide in the development of the annual budget.
2. When funding capital items, place priority on replacement of existing equipment and maintaining existing infrastructure.

D. Accounting Policy

1. Annually, an independent certified public accounting firm will issue an official opinion on the City's annual financial statements to the City Council. Additionally, City Council will appoint an Audit Committee to meet with the auditors and discuss their findings.
2. Financial systems will be maintained to monitor revenues and expenditures on a monthly basis.
3. Staff will give a Financial Report to City Council on a quarterly basis.

E. Debt Policy

1. Capital projects financed through the issuance of bonds or through an installment purchase contract (N.C.G.S. 160-A 20) shall be financed for a period not to exceed the anticipated useful life of the project.
2. The City will maintain its financial condition so as to continue a minimum bond rating of AA- and will have the rating agencies periodically review its bond rating.

F. Reserve Policy



City Council Priorities and Action Plan

1. The City will strive to maintain an Undesignated General Fund Balance equal to three months, or 25% of the general operating budget. These funds will be used to avoid cash flow interruptions, generate investment income, eliminate the need for short-term borrowing, and for use in the case of unanticipated emergencies.
2. In the Annual Budget, the City will reserve the equivalent of 2 pennies on the City's property tax rate in the General Capital Reserve, for the purpose of funding capital expenditures on a pay-as-you-go basis.
3. The City will establish a Contingency Reserve to provide for unanticipated expenditures of a nonrecurring nature to meet unexpected increases in service delivery costs. This reserve will be budgeted at up to 1.5% of recurring General Fund revenues estimated for that fiscal year.

Adopted this ____ day of _____, 2007

Mayor

City Manager

